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HAVE FAITH IN COOLIDGE!



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HAVE FAITH IN COOLIDGE!

The Story of a Personality



EARLY one night not long ago, a lean-faced man, fatigued by several hours of hay-pitching, undressed by the feeble light of a kerosene lamp and went to bed in an old farmhouse up in Vermont.

In the dead of night a lamp's light shining in his face, and his name tremblingly uttered, awakened him to the leadership of the most powerful government in the world.

Two hours later, in the presence of his wife and a handful of hastily-assembled acquaintances, and by the light of more oil lamps, he was duly and securely sworn into the office of President of the United States. A local justice of the peace, who happened to be his father, administered the oath.

Then the tired hay-pitcher went back to bed!

The faint rays of those kerosene lamps shining in the old Vermont farmhouse that historic night revealed a new Calvin Coolidge. Their light seems likely to have started a great illumination of this man that will presently shine 'round the globe.



Calm In a Great Moment

American history holds no more picturesque and fascinating episode than the falling of the presidential mantle upon Calvin Coolidge.

It came simultaneously with and as a part of an overwhelming national sorrow. The public mourns as almost never before; but it has found time, even in its grief, to be electrified by the suddenly-discovered personality of him who awoke under the eaves of the Vermont farmhouse that August midnight to blink his eyes for a moment in the dull glow of an oil lamp and hear himself named the personal leader of more than a hundred million citizens.



His acts of the succeeding few hours denoted the simple orderliness of his clear mind. To the few gathered about him he revealed, first, deepest emotion at the passing of his friend and leader. He sent a message of consolation to the stunned helpmate of the great man whose weary body had released its spirit. He obediently followed the advice of the momentary heads of the Government and speedily took his oath of office—availing himself of the adequate even if unusual means immediately at his hand.

He ate a simple farm breakfast. He packed and strapped his trunk. He gave the nation a brief, clear, encouraging message. He stole away a moment to visit his mother's grave. Then he went to the nearest railroad station, declined the pomp of a special



train, and journeyed out of quiet, rural New England into an immeasurable responsibility that will claim him—who knows how long?

He went with a calm self-possession that in those memorable hours of August third spoke volumes of hope to a grief-bowed nation and a bewildered capitol.

Calvin Coolidge's journey to Washington that day was in some strange way like the home-coming of a strong, able son when death has removed the beloved head of the family.



New England in general and Massachusetts in particular may be expected to idolize a bit their native son who has under such dramatic conditions taken his seat in the big chair at the White House. He is the first from New England to do so since Franklin Pierce; the first from Massachusetts since John Quincy Adams.

But in it all you will find the paramount New England sentiment for and about Coolidge today to be this: That the rest of the country shall come quite speedily to know what manner of man Calvin Coolidge really is, and to grasp the surprising fact that his police strike halo and his "Have Faith in Massachusetts" speech are only incidental manifestations of a great intelligence and a great character eminently sufficient to meet every demand that his elevation to supreme authority can make upon them.



New England and Massachusetts, fully sharing the nation's grief at the untimely passing of President Harding, are saying to the nation and the world: "Keep your eyes on this plain, quiet, decisive citizen of ours who has had to step into the breach. He is a statesman of highest calibre. *Have faith in Coolidge!*"



Revelations of Personality

And it is to the American people's decided advantage to study the man. The view they had of his personality three years ago, when a single official act of his gave him the limelight—and a nomination—was fleeting and insufficient. His conduct of his work at Washington since then was a dutiful performance of an almost colorless job—except that by a wise chief's wisdom Coolidge "sat in" with the mighty and absorbed what he learned.

Americans at large have yet a great deal to find out about this lean-faced, sandy-complexioned, twangy-voiced, modest-mannered Yankee who registers embarrassing reticence one moment and displays whip-like decisiveness the next.

Most of the people outside New England and Washington who have heard of Coolidge have doubtless gained a more or less definite impression that he is a silent, gloomy man without a glimmer of humor, probably very scholarly, certainly unemotional, notoriously no sportsman and unquestionably dripping with New England conservatism.



Now, some of these impressions of him have traces of correctness. But some of them haven't. And, above it all, the man is intensely human and preëminently a wise leader.

Many of these citizens of other localities have had no accurate line on Coolidge's executive abilities. Being a governor, settling a policemen's strike the right way and writing a speech or two that caught the popular fancy have not, to them, constituted *prima facie* evidence of the ability to swing the White House. Why should they? Haven't other governors of other states sometimes done things, too?

But the more one checks up the busy years of Calvin Coolidge's private and public life, the more they reveal his unusual fitness for the responsibilities he assumed in the feeble lamplight in the old Vermont farmhouse that morning.

It is *this* that his home friends and neighbors desire to become known far and wide. For, when it *is* known, the good fortune that is supposed to have dropped suddenly into the lap of Calvin Coolidge will be found to have descended, instead, upon his fellow countrymen!



"Let's Close the Ranks"

Even in these first few days of his leadership his ability to assume promptly and with complete efficiency the reins of executive authority is notably demonstrated.



The oldest inhabitants and observers at the national capital are astounded at the ease and self-possession with which Calvin Coolidge has sat down in the big chair, retained to himself every eminent counsellor in the official executive family, attacked quietly and determinedly an accumulation of major matters sufficient to stagger a less able beginner—and manipulated them to the dawning admiration of a nation almost holding its breath.

His ability to make even this beginning is an index of the resources, the long-trained habits of correct analysis, of action and of decisiveness concealed under the mild, modest exterior of Calvin Coolidge.

Men such as the Harding cabinet members, each a tower of individualism and each with his own personal freedom of action to consider in its relation to his future, do not overturn time-honored custom and remain with a new in-coming chief unless he possesses a remarkable *something* to hold them. Calvin Coolidge has it. It is their confidence in his certainty of statesmanship and the successful use thereof. Nothing else.

To them he quietly and feelingly said: "Let's close the ranks and go ahead." They did.

The gentlemen of the press as assembled in Washington—nearly two hundred of them—are hard-boiled. They have to be. They are shrewd, critical, truthful. They have to be that, too. They tell the truth about a President—or lose their jobs. These newspaper men are very plainly surprised at

the facility with which the new President has got started in his work. They rise en masse to tell the world that Calvin Coolidge is among the most approachable, communicative occupants of the big chair that have sat there these many years.



Americans like to know everything there is to know about their President. Then they usually judge him on three points: his broad, general ability as an executive; his readiness to understand and help great groups of citizens; his capacity as a good mixer. And they are in a measure as joyous at his proficiency in the last as they are soberly satisfied with his possession of the first or his activity in the second.

This country is going to see Calvin Coolidge give brilliant demonstration of his executive wisdom. It is going to see him display a knowledge of and sympathy with the sectional needs of his great bailiwick that were ingrained in him and conspicuously employed during his experience as leader of a great commonwealth.

His rating as a good mixer, on today's basis of popular estimating, is probably below par. But anyone who chooses for that reason to look askance at Calvin Coolidge's qualifications would better look twice and think hard before he does so.

A President in the Making

An able press has hastened to record with almost the fulness and accuracy of seasoned history the life and acts of Calvin Coolidge. They commence with that July Fourth, fifty-one years ago, when he first saw the light in a little room at the rear of his father's general store in Plymouth Notch, Vermont.

The chronicle runs through his rather uneventful boyhood on the farm and his not conspicuous career as a country lawyer; then reaches the era of Coolidge's public life— starting with his becoming Republican city committeeman in Northampton. It traces his performance all the way through the state organization up to the Governor's chair, touches on his succeeding service as presiding officer of the National Senate—and concludes with his unexpected elevation to the Presidency.

Viewed in comparison with the careers of other public men who have ascended to the chief magistracy or to even lesser heights, Calvin Coolidge's environments and experiences in service are not the most showy on record. But, accurately analyzed, they disclose the evidences of his peculiar fitness for supreme leadership.

To support New England's belief that the rest of the world will now do well to have faith in Calvin Coolidge it is necessary only to connect a few high spots in his life with his motives and acts at those times. These disclose the type of man who has so tranquilly assumed the heaviest burden now borne by any executive anywhere in the world.



As a small boy he developed a fondness for attending the town meetings over which his father presided as moderator for many years. Peg this, because it marked Calvin Coolidge's introduction to government—orderly and disorderly. This, plus his typically solid legal training and habits of keen analysis, gave him an excellent groundwork for his knowledge of men when assembled for collective action.

The kind of a youth who could win a gold medal for writing an essay on American history and then tuck it away without exhibiting it to his family, to escape the risk of being thought boastful, has unusual and detached powers of self-restraint. Coolidge did this.

Which brings to mind the laconic remark of a raw Western farmer who heard Coolidge make a speech from the tail end of a railroad train in the last national campaign, in which the modest candidate talked about everything and everybody but himself:

“Wa-a-al, Cal don’t blow none!”

Rich, indeed, is the record of Calvin Coolidge’s progress through the political and legislative life of Massachusetts. As people turn to review it today they are moved to marvel that, notable as they estimated it at the time, they did not appraise it even higher.

Being a farmer—and a good one—before he was a lawyer, he came to have a finger in substantially every piece of good agricultural legislation that came up at the Massachusetts State House after his arrival there.



Let farm "blocs" take notice. "Dirt" farmers have nothing on Calvin Coolidge!

Not yet have Massachusetts political circles forgotten how, as chairman of the state committee on agriculture, Coolidge metaphorically sweat blood in the interest of a certain historic measure calculated to benefit Massachusetts farmers sanely—and then, when defeated, turned loose the power of his personal influence and put the crusher on a flock of competitive bills that Massachusetts farmers had adjudged impracticable.

A sizable part of Coolidge's remarkable equipment for his duties today is his experience, both as legislator and Governor, with the profusion of labor, agricultural, social and welfare issues that happened to sweep through the Massachusetts State House during his official presence there.

Scores of the laws that now compose Massachusetts' far-famed policies on industrial and business equity and human relations, including soldiers' welfare, either bear the marks of Calvin Coolidge's handiwork while in the ranks or his signature as chief magistrate.

Let workingmen and working women and veterans of the wars and business people everywhere take notice of *that*, too!

And it is well to remember this: During all the period of his public life in Massachusetts, from his first election to the House in 1907, through his service in the Senate, his three-year service period as Lieutenant-Governor and two-year incumbency of



the Governor's chair, ending in 1920, the public and even his stoutest political opponents have never had other than highest respect for Calvin Coolidge's soundness in statesmanship, courage in action and fair play in every public and private relation.

He bears the reputation of never having broken a promise. There is in Boston today an old newspaper man who has not yet ceased to marvel that at the moment when the official committee was ushered into Coolidge's office at the State House to escort him to the final ceremony of his gubernatorial retirement, he kept the gorgeous delegation waiting three minutes while he carefully read and signed a certain letter he had promised to have ready at that time for the newspaper man.



When Decisiveness Made History

To Coolidge the handling of the now-famous Boston police strike was all in the day's work. He merely saw no other course to follow than the one he did follow. Privately he rather suspected it might spell his political finale, but this aspect of it could not have weight with him.

He anticipated no public acclaim, no historic permanence in the electrifying sentence embodied in his telegram to Samuel Gompers:

“ . . . *There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, anytime.*”



In reality it was the axiomatic expression of a conviction springing from a highly-trained mind that was concentrated at that moment on an enormously vital principle of government.

So, too, his "Have Faith in Massachusetts" speech to the Bay State Senate, in accepting its chairmanship, and his short "Do the Day's Work" address on a similar occasion later, were natural results of his instinctive ability in impressive diction. His senatorial appeal for brevity, on still another like occasion, ranks high for its epigrammatic value:

Honorable Senators, my sincerest thanks I offer you. Conserve the firm foundation of our institutions. Do your work with the spirit of a soldier in the public service. Be loyal to the Commonwealth and to yourselves. And be brief — above all things, be brief.

Those citizens who in today's great encounter with domestic and world-wide issues are praying for wise action in the Congress and the White House may take comfort from this utterance by Coolidge to the Massachusetts Senate:

. . . Don't hurry to legislate. Give administration a chance to catch up with legislation.

Or from these:

*Industry cannot flourish if labor languishes.
Suspension of one man's profits is suspension of another man's pay envelope.*

No one man is qualified to dictate to a great nation.



And if anyone should be tempted to question Calvin Coolidge's courage or decisiveness, let him recall that at the moment when a delegation of some of Massachusetts' most influential citizens were calling on him, to induce him to modify his proposed drastic action in the Boston policemen's strike, he gazed silently into their faces, then lifted his pen and signed the now-famous Law and Order proclamation.



Is "Cal" Humorous?

Is Coolidge devoid of a sense of humor?

This grave question needs examination. It may be he hasn't any fun in him. At any rate, he is not boisterous. He does not chortle. Unlike Abe Lincoln, Coolidge rarely if ever tells a funny story. Unlike Roosevelt, he pokes little or no fun at his associates. He has been known not to smile broadly for days at a stretch—in public. Smart, subtle sallies have often been shot at him without eliciting even a solitary guffaw.

But let's see. What would you say of a college youth who grew sadly weary of the interminable daily hash at his boarding house, and who, before attacking the conventional and mysterious mixture one day, looked suspiciously about him, then into the unfriendly eyes of the servant girl, and slyly asked:

"Maria, where's Fido?"

"In the kitchen, Cal."

"Call him in. I want to *see* him!"

"Here he is, Cal."

"Ah! All right, Maria."

Was it cold, serious information that Chairman Coolidge once imparted to an irate Massachusetts senator when, on receiving an official complaint from the said irate statesman that a hostile colleague had in debate consigned him to a certain torrid locality, Coolidge announced soothingly: "I've looked up the law, Senator, and you don't have to go there"?

Was he wholly serious when, in answer to a charming lady's timid query as to his favorite hobby, he replied, with a twinkle in his eyes:

"Running for office, I guess."

Just how chronically sombre is the temperament of the man who has over the fireplace in the living room at his Northampton home this framed motto:

*A wise old owl sat on an oak,
The more he saw, the less he spoke.
The less he spoke, the more he heard.
Why can't we all be like that bird?*

But let an anxious constituency be comforted: Cal Coolidge has humor! Those close to him—and there are several such—aver of their own knowledge that he is possessed of a normal sense of fun. The point is, he uses it advisedly, not at all publicly—and only when in the Coolidge judgment it is appropriate.



Who Made Him President?

If anyone proclaims Calvin Coolidge a "child of destiny," let us be earnestly thankful to Destiny.

A judge out in Oregon can be said to have started Coolidge on his way to the presidency, by precipitating his landslide selection as the vice-presidential nominee at Chicago. Shall Judge MacCammant therefore be hailed now as the president-maker?

Or shall it be the people of Massachusetts, who happened to have Coolidge in the Governor's office when the police strike came up?

Or must we give the credit to the firm of old lawyers up in Northampton, Mass., who gave him the law training that first focused local attention on the young man?

Or, shall we not admit and enjoy admitting the *truth*, which is that Colonel John C. Coolidge and his sainted wife, who brought Calvin Coolidge into the world and endowed him with an unusual brain and certain moral qualities, are in this case the real president-makers; and that, being thus endowed, Calvin Coolidge thereafter sought the ways of truth and substantial self-development, so that when the call came, through whatever devious circumstances, he was equipped and ready?

For that is the whole fact of it.

There is an old and wise saying that none but an able man will ever reach the White House. In the final analysis it is Coolidge's sound character and ability, as disclosed to the American people them-

selves, that placed him in the avenue of direct succession to the presidency.



Of himself Mr. Coolidge said, not so very long ago:

I have no idea why I have been successful in politics. Certainly I have no secret about it. It has seemed to come naturally that people have desired me to perform certain public functions, which I have undertaken to do. I have felt a personal obligation to give the public the best that I have.

Calvin Coolidge's future is in the hands of God, the American people and himself. He will broaden a little in every direction every day he sits in the White House. Governmental storms, if they should come, will not shake him. His remarkable ability to judge the future effect of legislation will be a revelation to the nation.

He is magnificently trained for his post, and his hands are free.



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